



The BLDGBLOG Book

Geoff Manaugh

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Read by millions since its launch in 2004, BLDGBLOG is the leading voice in speculation about architecture, landscape, and the built environment. Now *The BLDGBLOG Book* distills author Geoff Manaugh's unique vision, offering an enthusiastic, idea-filled guide to the future of architecture, with stunning images and exclusive new content. From underground exploration to the novels of J.G. Ballard, from artificial glaciers in the mountains of Pakistan to weather control in Olympic Beijing, *The BLDGBLOG Book* is "part conceptual travelogue, part manifesto, part sci-fi novel," according to Joseph Grima, executive director of New York's Storefront for Art and Architecture.

"BLDGBLOG is something new and substantially different from anything else I have seen," says Errol Morris, Director of *Fast, Cheap & Out of Control* and the Academy Award-winning documentary *Fog of War*. "Secretly, I had always hoped it would become a book. Geoff Manaugh has provided the reader with an excursion into a new world—part digital fantasy, part reality at the intersection of art, architecture, landscape design, and pure ideas. Like the blog, the book is personal, idiosyncratic, and, best of all, incredibly interesting."

The BLDGBLOG Book Details

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Author : Geoff Manaugh

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From Reader Review The BLDGBLOG Book for online ebook

Dave says

This is a delightfully imaginative collection of essays, interviews and tidbits of, as the title indicates, conjecture and speculation. This was unlike any other architecture book I've read in that the author samples wildly varied ideas that interest him and spins them out into often-surreal "what if" scenarios. I particularly enjoyed the interviews as for the most part the author connected sharply with his subjects and got even their minds moving in new directions. I did find myself rolling my eyes at a number of points when the author took speculation way past the realms of reality, but overall his ideas are fresh, enlightening, and above all, mind-expanding. Just don't take it TOO seriously. Lastly, I'm glad to have been gifted a print copy because it's a handsome book and I'm not sure I would have read all the equivalent blog posts.

Annick says

I received BLDGBLOG Book as a gift from a precious friend and I thank her warmly again and again and again (to indicate my pleasure for this book). I enjoyed reading it. More than a book on blog of architecture, The BLDGBLOG Book is a document on architecture, built and natural environment, on architecture fiction and other landscape futures. Well-written, well-documented, this book is a pleasure to read but also a reference for those with an interest beyond the simple medium of architecture. While having read it years ago, I still continue to refer to this book. Je le recommande chaleureusement (I warmly suggest his read).

Marty says

This book, like his blog contains his infectious enthusiasm for architecture in all its forms. I've been reading BLDGBLOG for years and i am stoked that this finally came out. Definitely a worthwhile read for a variety of readers.

Michael says

Managh thinks about architecture and the world in a completely unique way. His ideas are rarely about the practical, but his methods of making connections and drawing narratives out of ideas makes his writing fun and thought-provoking.

Chris Boette says

I wipe the dust from a printer I bought on Craig's List. A genie appears. The genie says to me, "I am the genie of the printer. You have set me free. I will grant you a wish to show my thanks. Every time the sun rises, I will print for you the newest content from one, and only one, website." I stare at the genie, my mouth slightly agape. "But no aggregate sites," he says. "I may have been trapped in a printer, but I'm not stupid."

Without hesitation, I say, "BLDGBLOG! Print me BLDGBLOG!" He nods, dissipates, and the printer whirs. Out come collated sheets, printed horizontally, ready to be folded, so that the stack may be read like a small book.

Then I wake up from my dream.

Although the papernet doesn't exist yet [looking at you, Little Printer], this book does & I am quite happy. Although this isn't a collection of blog posts, it exists in the same territory of speculation, wonder, and imagination as the digital form. It's absolutely dense with wacky ideas on architecture, urban spaces, and everything else, that one could spend a career bringing these ideas into some sort of physical existence -- thesis projects, graphic novels, screenplays, planned communities funded by the rich in countries with lax building codes.

More than this, the texts provide a different way of looking at the world, one that isn't tied down by schools of thought or a demand to fit into a pre-existing mode of design. What we see are possibilities, something that is lacking when we are faced with the constraints of budget, building codes, and a lack of vision.

Douglas Summers-Stay says

An exploration of the fantastic by way of architecture. It makes me remember why I grew up wanting to be an architect.

This has as much to do with architecture as freakonomics has to do with economics. It's not a subject matter, it's a way of approaching the world.

Dan Tasse says

Pretty fun. Like the blog, kind of all over the place, and I'm not going to lie, sometimes that makes it hard to follow, or to remember what I just read. But it's got enough entertaining stories, and entertaining speculation, that it's worth a sit on your coffee table.

Jefferson Tesla says

Geoff Manaugh is my favorite non-fiction writer. For those who don't know, BLDGBLOG is his website on "Architectural Conjecture, Urban Speculation, and Landscape Futures." It's a damn good editorial mix of travels, interviews, and general musings on the spaces we used to, do, and could inhabit.

I'm not sure how much of this collection is repurposed from the website since it's been a long time since I've trawled the archive, but it's a treasure trove nonetheless. Besides the greatest hits articles and beautiful photography, the book's even got a few ridiculous fiction vignettes in which Manaugh introduces a real architectural concept and takes it to a hilarious sci-fi extreme.

Landscape writing should be required reading for all creative types. In my personal experience, it's impossible not to get inspired by Manaugh's descriptions of spaces that sound fantastical but actually exist.

Patricia says

So wonderful. I think that in a thousand years from now when robots are, like, disassembling human brains to try to figure out how to build new and elite humanoid models, Manuagh's will be one of the one's they'll take apart and analyse. Seriously, how does this guy's mind work?

Nathanael says

This book is about what, not how. I guess that's what architecture is: an exploration of the hypothetical what.

That's not really what I am. This could be why I found the book fascinating, if a little hard to grasp.

I like the questions why and how. Especially how. My bias is towards action. I like to figure out how to implement an idea.

So, throughout this book, my brain was swirling with pictures and actions and diagrams that created the stuff the author talks about. The trouble was that his ideas were abstract that I often caught myself in negativity: you can't do that.

I appreciate the relentless focus on the hypothetical what. It was a refreshing challenge for my how brain.

Stefano says

So many stimuli paired with nearly zero content.

As a blog in the form of a book is surely interesting, full of suggestions and speculations. As a book only, though, lacks unity, relevance and even utility.

The same can apply to its main argument (architecture): BLDGBLOG is full with theoretical hints, but empty of any practical value.

good for skimming and reading through over a long period, bad to read thoroughly all in one

Jay.FB says

Meh,

I'll update this review later.

Greg Brown says

In case you're not familiar with the source material, BLDGBLOG is one of my favorite blogs out there. The tagline is *Architectural Conjecture, Urban Speculation, Landscape Futures*; in practice, this works out to be a mix of everything imaginable (and a fair amount of stuff that is barely so).

The organizing feature of this viewpoint is understanding the shape of the world as inescapably tied to its function, the aesthetic as more than *just* aesthetic. Manaugh asks us to consider the possibilities inherent in the sky, under the ground, and everywhere in between. Essays, interviews, and artwork serve as a stream-of-consciousness, allowing us to thread our way through Manaugh's dreams and nightmares of the world.

This sounds like a dry work of academic criticism, but it's the closest descendant I've found to Jorge Luis Borges' short fiction. Manaugh loves to spin off outlines of short-stories, pulling real drama and excitement out of what could be mere dry wisdom. He never forgets that - in the end - our surroundings are ultimately processed and received by us. Even his lifeless landscapes are viewed through the lens of humanity.

This might be what stops his stuff from being widely-cited within the formal field of architecture, but it makes his book into a series of adventures and one of my favorite recent reads. Very cool.

Ian says

"I think every piece of infrastructure—every building—is on a trajectory, and you're experiencing it at just one moment in its very extended life. We see things, but we don't often ask how they came about or where they're going to go from here—whether there will be structural deterioration, or if living things will colonize the structure. We tend to ignore these things, or to see them in temporal isolation. We also don't give enough time or consideration to how this infrastructure fits into the broader urban fabric, within the history of a city, and where that city's going, and whose lives have been affected by it and whatever may happen to it in the future. I think these are all stories that really need to start being told" (Michael Cook in Manaugh, pg. #71).

Tom Coates says

An unbelievably playful and creative book that challenges you to think outside of your normal preconceptions about what you might consider architecture, building, and non-fiction. More of a collection of flights of fancy and narrative expressions - think pieces - than an academic work, it's a book that (if you'll let it) really lets some air in to an often musty discipline.
